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From the Open Skies Proposal of 1955 to the Norstad Plan of 1960: A Plan Too Far

❖ David Tal

On 16 May 1960 the West German newspaper *Die Welt* reported that General Lauris Norstad, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), had sent a draft plan to the government of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) for its consideration. Norstad was proposing the establishment of a military inspection zone in Central Europe. The disclosure of this plan in *Die Welt* killed any prospects for its adoption, and Norstad's proposal soon sank into oblivion. Recent studies of U.S. and Western security and foreign policies in the 1950s and 1960s make no mention of the Norstad Plan.¹ This omission from the historical record is both unfortunate and unwarranted. Careful study of the relevant documents deposited at the U.S. National Archives and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library—some of them declassified only in the late 1990s—reveals that what came to be known as the Norstad Plan originated in President Eisenhower's Open Skies proposal of July 1955. Walt Rostow, who took part in the discussions leading up to Open Skies, summarized this episode as follows: "For our limited purpose, the simple fact is that Open Skies was rejected by [the Soviet Union]."²

1. McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices about the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988); Ian Clark, *Nuclear Diplomacy and the Special Relationship: Britain's Deterrent and America 1957–1962* (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1994); Murray Donnette, *Kennedy, Macmillan and Nuclear Weapons* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 2000); Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 119–120; John L. Gaddis et al. eds., *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Oliver Kendrick, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate, 1961–1963* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); and Andreas Wenger, *Living with Peril: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nuclear Weapons* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997). Marc Trachtenberg mentioned the plan, although not by name and in a very brief manner, in *Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 281. Even the author of the most recent biography of Norstad treats the subject only briefly and in a casual manner: Robert S. Jordan, *Norstad: Cold War NATO Supreme Commander* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 116–117.

2. W. W. Rostow, *Open Skies: Eisenhower's Proposal of July 21, 1955* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 64.

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Even as students of U.S. arms control policy continue to debate whether Eisenhower really intended Open Skies to be a serious disarmament plan or simply a propaganda measure, less known is the fact that the Soviet Union's rejection of the proposal was not the end of it.³ In Washington, DC, officials disagreed about a proper follow-up strategy. Because the Open Skies proposal had evoked a generally favorable response in the world, some officials believed that the United States should build on this apparent propaganda victory over the Soviet Union and proceed further with it, regardless of the chances of implementation. Others favored holding negotiations that would allow the proposal to be modified in a way acceptable to Moscow. At the heart of the debate lay the question of what exactly U.S. goals were in disarmament negotiations. On this issue, historians remain divided. Some scholars assume that the United States under Eisenhower was sincere in its pursuit of disarmament, whereas others claim that Eisenhower either had no intention of reaching a disarmament agreement or, if he had such an intention, was unable to overcome the objections of those within his administration who opposed it.⁴

An examination of the untold story of the process that led from Open Skies to the Norstad Plan sheds new light on the significance of the Open Skies proposal and its impact on the Eisenhower administration's approach to nuclear disarmament. The years 1955–1960 were a period of change, during which, in response to both external and internal factors, U.S. disarmament policy lost some of the rigid features that had hitherto impeded progress, allowing a more moderate and flexible stance to be adopted. Historians are aware of this process of change, but it still needs to be elucidated because of the customary division of the Eisenhower administration's disarmament policy into two unrelated periods: the first lasting from January 1953 to July 1955 and the second from July 1955 to the end of Eisenhower's presidency. The first period is portrayed as a preliminary stage leading up to the Open Skies proposal, and the years after July 1955 are seen as a time when the administration was preoccupied with the nuclear test ban negotiations.⁵

3. The historiographical dimension of the plan is discussed in David Tal, "Eisenhower's Disarmament Dilemma: From Chance for Peace to Open Skies Proposal," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 2001), pp. 175–196. My approach here to Eisenhower and disarmament is different from the way I approached it in the 2001 article.

4. The debate and the relevant literature are introduced in the two following papers: Martha Smith-Norris, "The Eisenhower Administration and the Partial Nuclear Test Ban, 1958–1960: Another Challenge to Revisionism," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (September 2003), pp. 504–506; and Jeremi Suri, "America's Search for a Technological Solution to the Arms Race: The Surprise Attack Conference of 1958 and a Challenge for 'Eisenhower Revisionists,'" *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Summer 1997), pp. 419–420.

5. For sources that deal with both periods using this dividing line, see Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President, 1952–1969*, 2 vols. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1984), Vol. 2, pp. 257–259, 264–267, 401–404, 449–454, 477–492; and Thomas Soapes, "A Cold Warrior Seeks

In reality, U.S. disarmament policy during the second half of the 1950s did not consist only of the test ban talks. The administration was also working intensively to move from the Open Skies proposal to the Norstad Plan. Scrutiny of that process shows that Eisenhower was more inclined to consider new approaches than has previously been assumed. Furthermore, the process involved little-known intra-administration struggles as well as later conflicts within NATO over the initiative to establish limited inspection zones in Central Europe and the Arctic Circle, an initiative that had significant influence on the changes in U.S. disarmament policy. This article is intended to cast some light on these relatively obscure developments and thus to extend our knowledge of the complexities of managing the Cold War.

Open Skies as a Starting Point

On 21 July 1955 President Eisenhower met with three other leaders—British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, French Prime Minister Edgar Faure, and Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Bulganin—at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and presented a plan that would soon exercise a profound effect on U.S. disarmament policy. Known as the Open Skies proposal, the plan called on the United States and the Soviet Union “to give to each other a complete blueprint of our military establishments, from beginning to end, from one end of our countries to the other; lay out the establishments and provide the blueprints to each other.” The next proposed stage would allow reconnaissance flights to photograph each other’s territory in order “to end the possibility of massive surprise attack,” thus easing international tensions and improving the political climate enough to make progress on arms reduction.⁶ Soviet leaders,

Peace: Eisenhower’s Strategy for Nuclear Disarmament,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 1980), pp. 57–66, 67–70. For sources that deal with the 1953–1955 years, see Robert Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Richard H. Immerman, *Johan Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), pp. 138–141; John Prados, “Open Skies and Closed Minds: American Disarmament Policy at the Geneva Summit,” in Günter Bischof and Saki Dockrill, eds., *Cold War Respite: The Geneva Summit of 1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), pp. 215–233; and Rostow, *Open Skies*. For sources covering the second period, see Robert A. Divine, *Blowing on the Wind: The Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1954–1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Benjamin Greene, “Eisenhower, Science and the Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1953–1956,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (December 2003), pp. 156–185; Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Nuclear Test Ban, 1961–63*, pp. 5–15; Smith-Norris, “The Eisenhower Administration and the Partial Nuclear Test Ban,” pp. 503–541; and Suri, “America’s Search for a Technological Solution to the Arms Race,” pp. 417–451.

6. “President Eisenhower’s ‘Open Skies’ Proposal,” 21 July 1955, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1955* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 716; and the 256th Meeting of the National Security Council (NSC), 28 July 1955, in Dwight D. Eisenhower Library (DDEL), Ann Whitman File (AWF), NSC Series.

however, declined Eisenhower's plan. Two months earlier, on 10 May 1955, they had presented their most far-reaching proposal for reducing armaments and prohibiting nuclear weapons, with the key requirement that enforcement procedures be based on inspections at fixed points such as ports, railway junctions, major road arteries, and airports.⁷ The Soviet leaders would not go beyond that, and their reaction to Eisenhower's Open Skies proposal was unequivocal and "100 percent negative" inasmuch as they perceived it as a "means of acquiring intelligence information on both sides."⁸

To some extent, this allegation was right. Open Skies was not a response to some urgent new need. Nothing had changed since the previous U.S. intelligence estimate in 1953 about the prospects of a surprise attack. Nor was the proposal meant to be a means of managing the Cold War. It was intended, rather, as both a strategic-military tool and a propaganda instrument. On the strategic-military side, Open Skies was an expression of Eisenhower's belief that technological changes in modern warfare had rendered inadequate the inspection apparatus first introduced in 1946. U.S. disarmament policy since 1946 had been based on the notion that an effective inspection system was essential to any disarmament agreement. The United States had officially presented this idea in June 1946 in its Baruch Plan for the control of nuclear energy and had continued to give primacy to inspections ever since. By 1955, however, Eisenhower assumed that advances in modern warfare had outpaced the inspection devices of the immediate postwar period. In the mid-1950s, tracking down nuclear bomb-making plants was no longer sufficient. With the development of modern delivery systems such as planes, submarines, and intercontinental ballistic missiles, the two sides would have to devise more sophisticated means of inspection.⁹

In addition, the Eisenhower administration was hoping to compel the Soviet Union to relax its domestic controls, with the aim of eroding and perhaps eventually tearing open the Iron Curtain and undermining the existing Soviet political order.¹⁰ In that sense, the plan aimed to bring an end to the Cold War, not to manage it. At a minimum, Eisenhower was hoping to gain

7. "Soviet Proposal Introduced in the Disarmament Subcommittee: Reduction of Armaments, the Prohibition of Atomic Weapons, and the Elimination of the Threat of a New War, 10 May 1955," in U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Documents on Disarmament, 1945-1959*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), pp. 456-467.

8. Memorandum of a Conversation, 21 July 1955, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, Vol. V, pp. 199, 456-457 (hereinafter referred to as *FRUS*, with appropriate year and volume numbers).

9. The 250th Meeting of the NSC, 26 May 1955, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Series; Bundy, *Danger and Survival*, p. 351; and David L. Sneed, *The Gaither Committee, Eisenhower and the Cold War* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp. 33-40.

10. Tal, "Eisenhower's Disarmament Dilemma," pp. 187-191; and 250th Meeting of the NSC (see note 9 supra).

an edge in the propaganda war with the USSR.¹¹ Some historians assume that Open Skies was aimed at legalizing what would otherwise be illegal intelligence operations and that the project spurred the development of U-2 reconnaissance plane.¹² But in fact the linkage between U-2 flights and the Open Skies proposal is not at all obvious. One important purpose of Open Skies reconnaissance flights was to provide warning of surprise nuclear attack, a task that necessitated frequent and safe overflights. However, the historians of the U-2 operation contend that “the years 1956–1960 were marked by long periods during which no overflights occurred, followed by brief bursts of activity.”¹³ Although Open Skies-related flights could have supplanted U-2 reconnaissance, the flights were simply not frequent enough to provide warning of nuclear surprise attacks.

In earlier years, the Soviet Union’s unequivocal rejection of Eisenhower’s proposal would have led to a stalemate. The prevailing approach to disarmament under both Harry Truman and Eisenhower during his first two years was one of take-it-or-leave-it. U.S. officials would propose a “package deal” without searching for a compromise formula designed to meet the Soviet Union at least halfway. This approach stalled the discussions on the Baruch Plan in 1946 and shaped the ideas laid out by Eisenhower in his Chance for Peace address in April 1953. But by mid-1955, things were different for two main reasons. The first was the Soviet “Peace Offensive” launched after Josif Stalin’s death in March 1953 and culminating in the Soviet proposal of 10 May 1955. The scope of inspections in the latest Soviet plan was less than that sought by the Americans, but it nevertheless signaled a departure from previous Soviet positions on disarmament. U.S. officials were unsure whether the proposal marked a real change in Soviet thinking, but Secretary of State John Foster Dulles believed, almost against his own convictions, that regardless of what lay behind this apparent new direction in Soviet foreign policy, the United States must explore it and respond in a positive manner in order to avoid being portrayed as the party rejecting any peaceful overtures.¹⁴

The second reason for the change in the traditional U.S. take-it-or-leave-it approach was organizational. In March 1955 Eisenhower had appointed the former governor of Minnesota, Harold Stassen, as his special assistant on disarmament. Stassen was given cabinet ranking, and after August 1955 he

11. Tal, “Eisenhower’s Disarmament Dilemma,” pp. 189–190.

12. Bundy, *Danger and Survival*, p. 351; Gaddis, *The Long Peace*, pp. 198–199; and Gregory W. Pedlow and Donald E. Welzenbach, *The CIA and the U-2 Program, 1954–1974* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1998), p. 98.

13. Pedlow and Welzenbach, *The CIA and the U-2 Program*, p. 215.

14. The 254th Meeting of the NSC, 7 July 1955, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Records.

also became deputy representative to the United Nations (UN) Disarmament Commission.¹⁵ Having been appointed to the job, Stassen performed it in the way he believed would both advance the cause of disarmament and promote U.S. interests. The Open Skies proposal gave him an opportunity to make a change in U.S. disarmament policy. In light of the Soviet Union's reaction, Open Skies seemed as infeasible as previous plans, and Stassen tried to figure out how to move forward. The issue became a source of contention between Dulles and Stassen, with Eisenhower vacillating between them. Stassen wanted to try to make the plan acceptable to Moscow, even if the requisite modifications weakened the proposal. He proposed that they first test the whole system of inspection by establishing a Technical Exchange Panel consisting of inspectors from countries that were represented on the UN Disarmament Subcommittee: the United States, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. These inspectors would visit selected military installations in the United States and the USSR to learn how the inspection mechanism could be put into operation, and they would then make technical recommendations concerning future inspection procedures. Stassen assumed that if Soviet leaders agreed to experiment with arms inspections in a limited context, they would not be able to stop there and would eventually be forced to agree to the next stage; namely, an expanded inspection regime.¹⁶ This thinking marked a significant departure from U.S. policymakers' customary insistence on take-it-or-leave-it. Stassen wanted to engage the Soviet Union in negotiations over modification of the original plan.

Dulles opposed Stassen's suggested change of course. In the days leading up to the July 1955 Geneva conference, Dulles had expressed his opposition to Open Skies, but after the conference he was impressed by the warm response given to the initiative. Headlines in *The New York Times* declared "Japan Hailed U.S. Bid" and "French papers impressed."¹⁷ This favorable reaction encouraged Dulles to take full advantage of the plan's popularity by basing U.S. disarmament policy on Open Skies. That is, his main interest was in the propaganda value of the plan, not its viability, and he believed that the United States should adhere to the plan in its existing form regardless of the Soviet response. He argued that Stassen's approach weakened Eisenhower's

15. The 236th Meeting of NSC, 10 February 1955, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Records; Eisenhower to Governor Stassen, 1 March 1955, in DDEL, AWF, Administration Series; and "Editorial Note," in *FRUS*, 1955–1957, Vol. XX, p. 58.

16. The Deputy Representative on the United Nations Disarmament Commission to Secretary of State, 15 August 1955, in *FRUS*, 1955–57, Vol. XX, p. 167; and the 261st Meeting of the NSC, 13 October 1955, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Records.

17. "Press of Europe Hails Eisenhower; Most Papers Call Arms Bid to Soviet Dramatic Move—His Sincerity Stressed," *The New York Times*, 23 July 1955, p. 4.

Open Skies proposal and that the positive world reaction to the proposal was useful for keeping the Soviet Union in an uncomfortable position. Dulles argued that if the United States were suddenly to offer a limited inspection zone, it would let Soviet leaders off the hook, allowing them to claim that by agreeing to limited inspections they were doing their share.¹⁸

The difference between Dulles and Stassen was important. Whereas Dulles and some other officials saw the primary importance of Open Skies as its dual propaganda and military value and believed that no change was necessary, Stassen regarded the plan as only the beginning. In Stassen's view, Open Skies was valuable as a tool that, if properly adjusted, would lead to a shift in the U.S. approach to disarmament. Dulles, by contrast, was little concerned about the plan's impact on U.S. disarmament policy. Was Stassen so persuasive and adept at bureaucratic maneuvering that, single-handedly, he could bring about a change in U.S. disarmament policy, overcoming the resistance of powerful figures at the State Department, the Defense Department, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)? Historians' answer to that question has generally been negative. Accordingly, they have downplayed Stassen's impact on U.S. disarmament policy and have argued that his eventual resignation because of the way he acted during the disarmament negotiations attests to his weakness.¹⁹ The evidence, however, shows that Stassen, through his tactics and negotiating techniques, managed to initiate a change that would be implemented not by him but by the man who helped to engineer his downfall—John Foster Dulles.

Stassen accomplished this feat in part because he had Eisenhower's support. Although historians remain divided over Eisenhower's disarmament policy, the evidence shows that the president wanted to achieve a nuclear disarmament agreement. He believed that the nuclear arms race was expensive, dangerous, and destructive and that disarmament was desirable if questions of trust and inspection could be resolved: "The inherent problem was that of people who are characterized by honesty and good intentions combating people who are dishonest and whose intentions are not good. Thus we will take and agree only to those things that we can prove."²⁰ Under these circumstances, an effective nuclear disarmament agreement would be nearly impossi-

18. Dulles to Stassen, 1 September 1955, in National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, Record Group (RG) 59, 330.13/9-155; and 261st Meeting of the NSC (see note 16 supra).

19. Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower the President* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), pp. 401–404; Robert A. Divine, *Blowing on the Wind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 60, 115; and Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 20.

20. Memorandum of a Meeting with the President, 5 November 1958, in *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Vol. III, p. 678.

ble to achieve, leaving the United States vulnerable to a surprise nuclear attack. The Open Skies proposal was intended to defuse this threat, and Stassen seemed to offer a path that could lead to a breakthrough.²¹

Hence, Dulles, despite his objections, did not reject Stassen's plan out of hand. Instead, he tried to ensure that the limited inspection zone proposal would fit into U.S. disarmament policy, arguing that it should be pursued simultaneously with Open Skies. Dulles thus helped Stassen to make the inspection zone an integral part of the disarmament negotiations, where it became a fixture for the other participants and a proposal that Stassen gradually maneuvered to his own advantage. Dulles spoke of the limited zone concept in preparatory talks before the meeting of foreign ministers in October 1955. He offered to create a limited inspection zone that would include Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, a unified Germany, and an area of equal size in the Eastern bloc. The two sides would agree to limits on the scope of armed forces stationed in this area, and the limits would be verified through aerial reconnaissance and ground inspections. Dulles insisted that unless Germany was unified the plan would be unviable because the Germans would be given to understand that the West accepted the division of their country as a permanent fact. For Dulles, the most important aspect of this proposal was German unification, and he indicated that the United States would not support the limited inspection zone unless it was accompanied by German unification.²² Dulles did not have to wait long to win support in West Germany for his position. No sooner had the idea been broached than Heinrich von Brentano, the FRG foreign minister, expressed his objection to the establishment of an inspection zone that would encompass a divided Germany.²³

In setting these conditions for the inspection zone plan, Dulles allowed Stassen to move ahead, but with formidable strings attached. Eisenhower did likewise, stipulating that Stassen's inspection plan must be based on the Open Skies proposal and on the Soviet plan of 10 May, though he agreed that Stassen could begin the process by concluding an agreement to designate

21. The 271st Meeting of the NSC, 22 December 1955, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Records; the 274th Meeting of the NSC, 25 January 1956, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Series; the 275th Meeting of the NSC, 7 February 1956, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Records; Record of Actions Taken at the 275th Meeting of the NSC, 7 February 1956, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Records; and Diary, 8 February 1956, in DDEL, Dwight D. Eisenhower (DDE) Diaries Series.

22. Memorandum of Conversation, 31 August 1955, in *FRUS*, 1955–1957, Vol. V, pp. 561–563; N. Bulganin to President Eisenhower, 19 September 1955, in DDEL, AWF, International Series; and Dulles to Lodge, 29 November 1955, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/11-3055.

23. Secretary of State to the American Embassy in Bonn, 1 October 1955, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/10-155.

small strips of territory in the United States and the USSR as a test of the feasibility of an inspection system.²⁴ Stassen first presented his plan to the UN Disarmament Subcommittee when it met in London in March–April 1956. The three Western representatives endorsed the plan, but the Soviet delegation rejected it, arguing that the United States was more interested in inspection than in disarmament.²⁵ One member of the Soviet delegation claimed that aerial inspection would not prevent surprise attack and that only the ground control posts included in the Soviet proposal of 10 May were adequate for this purpose.²⁶ Indeed, this aspect of the Soviet plan was integrated into a larger proposal that the Soviet delegation presented to the subcommittee on 27 March 1956 calling for the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces. The Soviet proposal also included Eden's suggestion in July 1955 that they create a limited zone of inspection of armaments in Europe that would include both halves of Germany as well as adjacent states.²⁷ The UN Disarmament Subcommittee adjourned on 7 May 1956 without agreement, but both Stassen and the Soviet delegation hoped to resume the talks soon.²⁸

To try to make the Western proposal more acceptable to the Soviet delegation, Stassen included a provision distinguishing between inspections for disarmament and inspections intended to forestall surprise attack. He claimed that any disarmament plan must be guaranteed by an inspection program based on Eisenhower's Open Skies proposal, combined with the Soviet ground inspection plan of 10 May. With regard to surprise attack, Stassen recommended development of an inspection and control system on a smaller scale, even if this would be inadequate to serve as a permanent arms control

24. Secretary of State to the Deputy Representative on the United Nations Disarmament Commission, 15 August 1955, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/8-1555; the 257th Meeting of the NSC, 7 February 1956, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Series; "Record of Actions Taken at the 275th Meeting of the NSC," 7 February 1956, in *FRUS*, 1955–1957, Vol. XX, p. 329; and H. Hoover to the American Embassy in London, 12 March 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-1256.

25. W. Aldrich to Secretary of State, 21 March 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-2156; Stassen to Secretary of State, 6 March 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-656; Winthrop Aldrich to Secretary of State, 7 May 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-756; Walworth Barbour to Secretary of State, 9 March 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-956; Barbour to Secretary of State, 26 March 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-2656; and "U.S. Draft Working Paper Submitted to the Disarmament Subcommittee: First Phase of a Comprehensive Agreement for Disarmament," 3 April 1956, in U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Documents on Disarmament, 1945–1959*, Vol. 1, pp. 608–609. The Anglo-French "Working Paper" was submitted to the subcommittee on 19 March 1956: W. Aldrich to Secretary of State, 19 March 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-1956.

26. W. Aldrich to Secretary of State, 21 March 1956; and W. Aldrich to Secretary of State, 22 March 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-2256.

27. "Soviet Proposal Introduced in the Disarmament Subcommittee: Draft Agreement on the Reduction of Conventional Armaments and Armed Forces," 27 March 1956, in U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Documents on Disarmament, 1945–1959*, Vol. 1, pp. 603–607.

28. W. Aldrich to Secretary of State, 7 May 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/5-756.

system. The system would consist of partial aerial surveillance, coupled with ground posts and radar installations.²⁹

The Soviet government announced its acceptance of the test inspection zone while deferring action on Eisenhower's aerial surveillance plan. Soviet officials continued to insist that the test inspection zone did not preclude the need to control disarmament or prevent aggression, but if the idea was so important to the United States and was a precondition for a disarmament agreement, then the Soviet government was ready to establish a zone that would stretch 800 kilometers from east to west, starting from a demarcation line dividing the military forces of the two sides.³⁰

State Department officials opposed Stassen's distinction between inspection to prevent surprise attack and inspection to verify arms reductions, and they called for a single inspection system based on Eisenhower's plan.³¹ Dulles, however, was ready to go along with a limited inspection zone, but only on condition that the division line set by the Soviet Union would not be the border between West Germany and East Germany. Instead, he wanted to use the less politically sensitive boundary along the Oder and Neisse rivers that divided Germany from Poland.³² Dulles's position constituted a change in U.S. policy on inspection. Up to this point, neither the Truman administration nor the Eisenhower administration had been willing to entertain anything less than a comprehensive inspection program. Dulles in effect was saying that an inspection system could be implemented gradually, an approach he offered to apply to arms reduction as well.³³

The limited inspection zone was on the agenda of the UN Disarmament Subcommittee when it next met in London in March 1957. The Soviet Union and the United States each tabled a disarmament proposal, and Britain and France jointly submitted a third proposal. All the proposals were thoroughly discussed, and the five members of the subcommittee agreed that the limited inspection zone proposal was worthy of deliberation.³⁴ The way was open for Stassen to advance, and he proposed to create a limited aerial inspec-

29. Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant to the President, 29 June 1956, in DDEL, Office of the Staff Secretary, Subject Series.

30. Bohlen, Moscow, to Secretary of State, 17 November 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/11-1756.

31. The Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs to the President's Deputy Special Assistant, 15 August 1956, in *FRUS*, 1955-1957, Vol. XX, p. 415.

32. Secretary of State to Graham Martin, 21 December 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/12-2156; and Secretary of State to Charles Bohlen, 24 December 1956, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/12-2456.

33. "Record of Action of a Special Meeting," 21 November 1956, in DDEL, DDE Diary Series.

34. John. H. Whitney, U.S. Ambassador to the UK, to Secretary of State, 15 March 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-1557; and Whitney to Secretary of State, 24 April 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/4-2457.

tion zone that would include parts of Canada and a small segment of the northwestern United States and extend across the Danube to the west of Leningrad. The zone would exclude most of the United States and Western Europe, but would cover sites of major troop concentration that were potential staging posts for surprise attack. Anxious to avoid opposition from Dulles and the West Germans, Stassen was careful not to make the division line the West German–East German border; he instead designated it from Vienna to Stockholm. The reaction of other Western representatives was positive, as was the response from Washington.³⁵ The North Atlantic Council (NAC) discussed the European zone proposal at the end of May 1957 and gave a generally positive response. The European members of the NAC expressed their desire to be included in negotiations over the European zone and called for the military command of NATO—mainly General Norstad—to consider the military significance and implications of the inspection zone concept.³⁶

The Soviet response to Stassen's proposal was also positive. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Valerian Zorin, who headed the Soviet delegation, reintroduced a Soviet plan that had earlier been rejected by the West. However, this time the proposal included an implied willingness to discuss a partial disarmament plan, a change that led Stassen to conclude that Moscow was genuinely ready to move ahead.³⁷

The U.S. government's reaction was also generally positive, apart from the JCS. Admiral Arthur Radford, the JCS chairman, argued that the Soviet Union could not be trusted and that Soviet leaders had reneged on earlier commitments. The USSR, he said, was participating in disarmament negotiations only because of the steady relative increase of American strength over the past few years. Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson shared Radford's view of Soviet untrustworthiness and called for slow, careful movement in the disarmament negotiations. But he was inclined to accept the idea of a European inspection zone, though without any preconditions. As he saw it, the European members of NATO should be the ones to decide whether to accept the concept of an inspection zone, which would lead to a reduction of forces and a prohibition on the stationing of American nuclear weapons, thus impairing NATO's defense capabilities. The inspection zone was also connected to the broader issue of a European security system, one that would be part of Ger-

35. Whitney to Secretary of State, 19 March 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/3-1957; Memorandum of Conversation, 20 April 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/4-2057; Memorandum of a Conference with the President, 23 April 1957, in DDEL, DDE Diary Series; and Whitney to Secretary of State, 24 April 1957.

36. G. Perkins to Secretary of State, 30 May 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/5-3057.

37. Whitney to Secretary of State, 26 April 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/4-2657; Whitney to Secretary of State, 30 April 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/4-307; and Whitney to Secretary of State, 5 May 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/5-557.

man reunification. If the NAC were to endorse the idea of an inspection zone, Wilson recommended that it be pursued only with the simultaneous implementation of the Eisenhower plan in Europe.³⁸

The trend within the U.S. administration was generally supportive of a limited inspection zone, and consequently the State Department proposed that two zones be discussed. One would be a U.S.-Soviet zone stretching along Siberia, the Arctic Circle, Alaska, a section of western Canada and part of the western United States. This zone would secure the U.S. homeland from surprise attack. The second zone would be European and was the one of greater interest to the Soviet Union. Echoing Wilson, Dulles contended that the Europeans should have primary say on the latter zone and that any proposals regarding it should first be discussed by NATO and then, only after approval, be debated at the Disarmament Conference.³⁹

This distinction between the U.S.-Soviet zone and the European-Soviet zone seemed logical and even unavoidable, and the notion that a European inspection zone would require the consent of the European members of the North Atlantic alliance seemed equally logical. But these positions were also bound to cause problems. One question that preoccupied European NATO members was whether a Soviet-European inspection zone should be established as part of a wider disarmament agreement or as a separate measure. Those in favor of linking the two zones included Greece, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, and Canada. The Netherlands was against it. The French representative to the UN Disarmament Subcommittee, Jules Moch, called for a European zone that would stretch from the Urals to the Atlantic, and this proposal was endorsed by Turkey and Italy.⁴⁰ West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer agreed that the first limited steps toward disarmament could be taken prior to German reunification but that they should be restricted to the U.S.-Soviet inspection zone. If the first stage included a European zone together with other disarmament measures such as a limit on nuclear testing, a cessation of nuclear weapons production, and a limit on conventional forces, the Soviet Union would lose any interest in moving to-

38. 274th Meeting of the NSC, 25 January 1956; "Preliminary Comments on Mr. Stassen's Disarmament Proposal of 9 May 1957," in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/5-1157; and Secretary of Defense to Secretary of State, 17 May 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/5-1757.

39. Bureau of European Affairs, the State Department, to Secretary of State, 19 April 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/4-1957; Memorandum of Conversation, 17 May 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/5-1757; Informal Memorandum to Secretary of State, 22 May 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/5-2257; Memorandum by the Delegation to the Subcommittee of the UN Disarmament Commission to Secretary of State, 31 May 1957, in *FRUS*, 1955-1957, Vol. XX, p. 568; and Secretary of State to Perkins, 4 June 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/6-357.

40. G. Perkins to Secretary of State, 30 May 1957, in NARA; and Perkins to Secretary of State, 7 June 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/6-757.

ward a comprehensive disarmament agreement, and the question of German reunification would remain unresolved.⁴¹

Stassen was unhappy about these splits. He told West German officials that he was loath to see the talks break down because of Bonn's objections. Similar misgivings were expressed in the FRG as well. This pressure ultimately bore fruit, as West German Foreign Minister von Brentano and the FRG ambassador to the United States, Heinz Krekeler, told Dulles and the U.S. ambassador in separate conversations that West Germany was ready to consider the creation of an inspection zone, although not unconditionally. For instance, if the Soviet Union raised the inspection issue, the United States should discuss the Arctic zone option first. But if Soviet officials wanted to discuss the European zone, this would necessitate several conditions: the other NATO countries had to agree; it would not lead to formal recognition of East Germany; the zone's border could not correspond to the inner-German border; and the final stage of disarmament was to be achieved only after resolution of the German problem.⁴²

The NAC concluded by authorizing the Western representatives on the UN Disarmament Subcommittee to continue negotiations over the proposed inspection zone. The NAC also asked Norstad for his opinion.⁴³ At a NAC meeting in June 1957, he said that from a strictly military point of view he supported the proposal to establish a European inspection zone because the greatest danger to Western Europe was a ground or aerial surprise attack. He therefore believed that a unified system of control and inspection based on ground, air, and radar components would reduce this danger. Norstad added that the region covered by ground inspections should include the two Germanys, Poland, and Czechoslovakia and that aerial inspections should encompass a larger area stretching from the French Atlantic to the Urals.⁴⁴ He focused on the military aspects of the plan, but he was well aware of the political implications, especially the concern that a division line running along the boundary separating the two Germanys would perpetuate that country's partition.⁴⁵

On 29 August 1957 U.S. diplomats presented a working paper on partial measures of disarmament to the UN Disarmament Subcommittee laying out the U.S. position on inspection zones. The paper listed ten disarmament mea-

41. Whitney to Secretary of State, 3 June 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/6-357.

42. The American Embassy in Bonn to Secretary of State, 4 June 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/6-457; and Memorandum of Conversation, 6 June 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/6-557.

43. Whitney to Secretary of State, 7 June 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/6-757.

44. L. Norstad to Secretary-General of NATO, 20 June 1957, in DDEL, Norstad, Lauris: Papers, 1930-1987, Disarmament Plans.

45. *Ibid.*

asures that should be undertaken during the first stage of an agreement and delineated three inspection zones: a larger zone comprising all the territory of the United States, Canada, and the Soviet Union; a limited zone running along the Arctic line and including sections of the United States and the Soviet Union, Canada, and other countries; and a third zone in Europe, ideally from the Urals to the Atlantic, though a smaller area would be acceptable if it included significant sections of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.⁴⁶ The Soviet response to the working paper, including the inspection zone proposals, was negative, and the UN Disarmament Subcommittee session in London adjourned.⁴⁷

Eisenhower, Dulles, and Stassen met to try to figure out how to move forward. Stassen proposed a direct approach that would offer the Soviet Union a European inspection zone more to its liking. He introduced a revised proposal calling on the United States to pursue a 24-month nuclear test suspension and to establish a European inspection zone covering the same NATO territory as in the previous plan, along with regions of Eastern Europe and a small portion of the western USSR. This zone was smaller than in the August 1957 working paper, but Stassen insisted that it covered more territory than had been stipulated by General Norstad as the essential minimum—a claim Norstad later denied. Relying also on a statement made by Chancellor Adenauer in Hamburg in reference to the inspection zone, Stassen argued that the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Party's victory in the West German elections would make it easier for Adenauer to accept a European inspection zone, and it would then be possible to address Soviet objections. If Moscow accepted the inspection zone plan, Stassen said, the zone would constitute a wedge between the Soviet Union and its East European satellites and would thus help to erode the Soviet grip on these countries. The zone would also help to open up the Soviet Union itself, a long-standing U.S. objective.⁴⁸

Dulles and the JCS opposed Stassen's new proposal, but Eisenhower "found himself" in agreement with Stassen.⁴⁹ The president decided that

46. "Working Paper: Proposals for Partial Measures of Disarmament," 29 August 1957, in DDEL, White House Office (WHO) Subject Files, Alphabetical Subseries. See also "Address by the Honorable J. F. Dulles, Secretary of State, before the UN General Assembly," 19 September 1957, in DDEL, General Correspondence and Memorandums.

47. The American Embassy in Moscow to Secretary of State, 29 August 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/8-2957; and W. Barbour to Secretary of State, 29 August 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/8-2957.

48. Memorandum from Stassen to Secretary of State, 7 October 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/10-757; Memorandum for Secretary of State, 8 October 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/10-857; the 350th Meeting of the NSC, 6 January 1958, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Series; and Memorandum of Conversation with General Norstad, 18 January 1958, in DDEL, General Correspondence of Memoranda, Dulles Papers.

49. Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, 31 December 1957, in DDEL, WHO, Office of the Spe-

Stassen's inspection zones plan should be pursued with one alteration: whereas Stassen was taking account of the Soviet Union's reaction to each proposed zone, Eisenhower wanted the American plan to be discussed first with the NATO allies. Only after securing their agreement could the plan be presented to Moscow.⁵⁰ Among Eisenhower's reasons for this approach was the introduction of a proposal by Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki to the UN General Assembly on 2 October 1957 for the denuclearization of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the two Germanys. The proposal included an implementation clause that envisaged "a system of broad and effective monitoring in the area of the proposed zone." The inspections were to be both on the ground and from the air, and the experience gained in the process "could provide useful experience for the realization of broader disarmament measures."⁵¹ The Soviet government embraced the Rapacki Plan, but NATO rejected it on the grounds that it meant depriving member-states of their nuclear shield while leaving the Soviet Union's massive ground forces intact within striking distance of Western Europe.⁵² The British government, however, suggested that the plan might be useful "as a basis for counter-proposals." On separate occasions, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and French envoy Jules Moch introduced their own versions of what could be described as a hybrid of the European inspection zone and the Rapacki Plan. The British called it the "Disengagement Plan."⁵³ Although nothing came of either proposal, the Eisenhower administration felt obliged to respond to the European allies' views.

Another incentive for supporting Stassen's proposal was Norstad's decision in early March 1958 to offer his own European inspection plan, based on Stassen's. With the disarmament talks stalemated, the general believed that the United States and NATO should return to the European inspection zone to try to regain the initiative that had seemingly been lost to the Soviet Union. The European inspection zone, in Norstad's view, had several advantages: it

cial Assistant on National Security Affairs, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subject; and the 350th Meeting of the NSC, 6 January 1958.

50. 350th Meeting of the NSC, 6 January 1958.

51. "The Rapacki Plan," in U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Documents on Disarmament, 1945-1959*, Vol. 2, pp. 839-892; and David Stefancic, "The Rapacki Plan: A Case Study of East European Diplomacy," *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (January 1988), pp. 401-410.

52. "U.S. Views on Rapacki Plan," 5 February 1958, W1052/96, in The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNAUK), Foreign Office (FO) 371/13708; and the American Delegation in Geneva to Secretary of State, 15 April 1960, in DDEL, Norstad, Lauris: Papers, 1930-1987, Disarmament Plans 2.

53. The American Embassy in Paris to Secretary of State, 6 December 1957, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/12-656; Caccia to Secretary of State, 2 January 1958, in DDEL, AWE, International Series; Memorandum of Conversation, 23 January 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/1-2358; "Disengagement," 3 February 1958, W1042/98, in TNAUK, FO 371/137080; Jordan, *Norstad*, 108; Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm, 1956-1959* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 464-465; and Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, pp. 220-221.

would impress public opinion in Western and other countries as a “forward-looking easily understandable first step toward the easing of cold war tensions”; it would not prejudice the Western position on German reunification and would not imply *de facto* recognition of the East German regime; it would not compromise the Western demand that the Soviet Union accept the other proposals in the working paper submitted in August 1957; it would not cause either side to fear unilateral capitulation on any essential elements of its security; and it could be gradually implemented and thereby facilitate “both practically and psychologically a wider *détente* in the future.”

Norstad proposed that the European inspection zone include East and West Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. To allay the FRG’s concerns, he agreed to consider bringing other NATO countries into the zone, possibly the Netherlands and Belgium. He also proposed that the aerial inspection should cover at least the same area as the ground inspection and that overlapping radar arrangements be included in the plan. In addition, Norstad argued that the inspection and control of nuclear weapons should focus on means of delivery and on vehicles. Both sides, he said, would exchange blueprints of their military installations and deployment of forces within the inspected area, and the first task of the inspection teams would be to verify the blueprints. The teams should have their own lines of communication and their own communication systems and should be allowed complete mobility within the zone, without needing to seek permission. In Norstad’s view, the inspection force should consist of approximately 3,000 people—1,500 from each side—and should comprise mixed American and Soviet teams. Although a force of this size would not be able to track every military installation or object within the inspection zone, it would be capable of tracking significant troop movements that might signal preparations for a surprise attack.

Norstad averred that such a zone would significantly reduce the danger of surprise attack and would be a more desirable alternative to both the Rapacki Plan and the Disengagement Plan. The European inspection zone would not compel NATO to surrender its best deterrence assets or compromise its ability to defend Western Europe, and success with the zone would increase mutual trust and help to ease international tensions, making it easier to move ahead toward a comprehensive and effective control of armaments.⁵⁴

With the introduction of the Norstad Plan, Stassen could claim that he had accomplished the goals he set for himself after the Soviet Union rejected the U.S. proposal of August 1957. Stassen had proposed that a smaller area be put on the table, and Dulles had objected, but Norstad was now calling for a European inspection zone that would be smaller than the one first proposed.

54. “The Norstad Plan,” 6 March 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/3-658.

Dulles also had objected to Stassen's attempts to separate the inspection zone from the U.S. disarmament plan, but Norstad had now conferred his imprimatur on the separation. But Stassen was not around to celebrate his victory, having resigned as the president's special assistant for disarmament on 14 February 1958 after repeated clashes with Dulles.⁵⁵

One might have expected that U.S. disarmament policy would revert to the Open Skies proposal after Stassen's forced resignation and that his notion of incremental progress by means of partial agreements such as limited inspection zones would be abandoned. But as things turned out, partial agreements remained a U.S. goal. With Stassen gone, Dulles endorsed a revised U.S. disarmament plan that was introduced in March 1958 and based to a great extent on Stassen's plan.⁵⁶ Dulles by this point had changed his views, having sensed that a general and comprehensive disarmament agreement was unachievable. He had come to realize that "there is no way of turning back history" to a time when no nuclear bombs existed. He was ready to consider a more limited formula that might be acceptable to the Soviet Union, and, even if the Soviet Union did not accept it, the effort would at least make a good impression on world opinion—a point on which Eisenhower agreed.⁵⁷ The president told Dulles that a new approach to disarmament was necessary because world opinion might put the blame for the stalemate in the disarmament negotiations on the United States. New ideas that would prove to the international community that Washington was sincere in its pursuit of an agreement were therefore essential.⁵⁸

But Eisenhower's endorsement of the limited inspection zone idea was more than just a tactical step to improve the U.S. image in the world. The limited inspection zone offered U.S. disarmament policy a new direction, which Eisenhower was anxious to see. The plan itself was not what mattered; the important thing was that the United States would no longer adhere to an all-or-nothing approach and would be ready to discuss partial measures. Eisenhower and Dulles saw the limited inspection zone idea as a way of breaking the stalemate in disarmament talks.⁵⁹

A letter to Eisenhower from the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in April

55. Harold Stassen to President Eisenhower, 14 February 1958, in DDEL, AWF, Administrative Series; and President Eisenhower to Harold Stassen, 15 February 1958, in DDEL, DDE Diaries Series.

56. Memorandum from Secretary of State's Special Assistant for the Disarmament and Atomic Energy to Secretary of State, 18 March 1958, in *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Vol. III, p. 559; and Memorandum of Conversation, 8 April 1958, in *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Vol. III, pp. 593–594.

57. Memorandum of Conference with the President, 24 March 1958, in *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Vol. III, pp. 569–570.

58. President Eisenhower to Secretary of State, 26 March 1958, in DDEL, DDE Diaries Series.

59. Dulles to USUN, 23 April 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 330.13/4-2358; and Memorandum of Conversation, 24 April 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/4-2458.

1958 provided the opportunity to move ahead with the inspection zone plan. Khrushchev alleged that U.S. bombers armed with nuclear weapons had flown above the Arctic in the direction of the USSR. The Eisenhower administration responded by resubmitting to the UN Security Council a plan that was also conveyed by Eisenhower to Khrushchev. The proposal, introduced by Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, called for the creation of an international inspection system for the Arctic zone and for the establishment of groups of technical experts from both sides who would jointly study the problems and feasibility of inspections to warn of surprise attack.⁶⁰ Although the immediate Soviet reaction was to vote against the proposal on the ground that the proposed inspection zone was no more than an intelligence-gathering operation, Khrushchev agreed to the meeting of the experts.⁶¹ In response, Dulles asked James Killian, the special assistant to the president for science and technology, to study the practical aspects of an inspection system to warn of surprise attacks in designated zones.⁶² Dulles also encouraged the European NATO allies to take part in the conference.⁶³ The French, who objected to the size of the zone proposed by Khrushchev, were afraid that the conference of experts might become a first step toward the establishment of such a zone. They proposed instead that the experts should discuss the subject *in abstracto*, without relation to any specific zones.⁶⁴ The U.S. administration concurred and revised its proposal to meet the French demands. The objectives of the conference would be to provide a technical assessment of the surprise attack problem, the effectiveness of various measures aimed at reducing the danger of surprise attack, and the technical requirements for various methods of inspection.⁶⁵ No reference was made to a specific inspection zone.

60. Chairman Khrushchev to President Eisenhower, 22 April 1958, in DDEL, AWF, International Series; Memorandum of Conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, 26 April 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/4-2858; and President Eisenhower to Chairman Khrushchev, 28 April 1958, in DDEL, AWF, International Series.

61. William J. Jordan, "Gromyko Charges 'Publicity' by U.S.; Says Arctic Inspection Plan Is Designed to Collect Intelligence Data," *The New York Times*, 30 April 1958, p. 12; Memorandum of Conversation, 30 April 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/4-3058; Cabot Lodge to Secretary of State, 7 May 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/5-758; Chairman Khrushchev to President Eisenhower, 2 July 1958, in DDEL, AWF, International Series; and N. Khrushchev to D. Eisenhower, 2 July 1958, in DDEL, AWF, International Series.

62. J. Dulles to J. Killian, 3 July 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/7-358; and J. Dulles to President Eisenhower, 3 July 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/7-358.

63. Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. Wiggin, First Secretary, British Embassy, 24 July 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/7-24.

64. Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. Pelen, Counselor, French Embassy, 10 July 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/7-1058.

65. Secretary of State to the American Embassy in Moscow, 22 September 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/9-2258; and Secretary of State to Various U.S. Embassies, 24 October 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/10-2458.

The Surprise Attack Conference that took place in Geneva from 10 November to 18 December 1958 has been described at length elsewhere.⁶⁶ The head of the U.S. delegation maintained that the conference “accomplished a great deal,” but in fact the gap between the United States and the Soviet Union over the question of inspection zones remained as wide as ever. The Soviet ambassador to the United States, Mikhail Menshikov, asked what the purpose of an inspection zone would be. The Soviet Union, he insisted, had no aggressive agenda and no intention of launching a surprise attack, and thus the proposal to set up an inspection zone in the Arctic separate from other disarmament measures was intended solely to distract public opinion from U.S. violations of Soviet territory. He also claimed that the area of the USSR designated for inspection in the American plan was far larger than the designated area in the United States. Citing these factors, Menshikov vetoed the resolution.⁶⁷ Khrushchev, for his part, argued that an inspection zone might make sense if based on the guidelines offered by the Soviet Union since 1955—namely, an 800-kilometer demarcation line separating NATO and Warsaw Pact forces. The Soviet proposal also called for the Arctic inspection zone to include a greater part of the United States to make it equal to the Soviet area under inspection. Khrushchev also wanted the zone to be part of broader disarmament measures. In keeping with a recent Soviet proposal for a conference to study inspection of a nuclear test ban, Khrushchev called for representatives from the United States, the Soviet Union, and other countries to meet and study measures to prevent nuclear surprise attack and other disarmament proposals.⁶⁸ That was also the tone of the conference, spurring both Dulles and Eisenhower to conclude that “military inspection to insure against surprise attack . . . appeared to be ruled out.”⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the idea refused to die. Although the Arctic inspection zone proposal did disappear, Norstad together with the British kept alive the idea of a European inspection zone—an idea that became known as the Norstad Plan. British officials believed that although such a zone could not offer a full guarantee against surprise attack in an age of intercontinental ballistic missiles, the political and psychological benefits of penetrating Soviet areas were of such importance that a European inspection zone would be worthwhile regardless of its military and technical effectiveness.⁷⁰ The plan was resuscitated

66. Suri, “America’s Search for a Technological Solution to the Arms Race,” pp. 417–451.

67. Memorandum of Conversation, 30 April 1958, in NARA.

68. Khrushchev to Eisenhower, 2 July 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/7-258.

69. The 392nd Meeting of the NSC, 23 December 1958, in DDEL, AWE, NSC Series; Memorandum of Conference with the President, 12 January 1959, in DDEL, DDE Diaries Series; and Memorandum of Conversation, 14 January 1959, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/1-1459.

70. Whitney to Secretary of State, 23 September 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/9-2358.

in the United States as well. After the failure of the Surprise Attack Conference and the prolonged negotiations over a nuclear test ban amid growing international pressure for progress on nuclear disarmament, the State Department and Defense Department recommended to the president that an interdepartmental study be launched on U.S. disarmament policy. Charles Coolidge, a Pentagon official, was appointed director of the Joint Disarmament Study.⁷¹ This appointment proved important because Coolidge came to support the Norstad Plan and included it in the report he submitted in December 1959. The report indicated that serious disarmament negotiations were a worthwhile long-term goal but that the United States should first seek to test Soviet intentions through limited measures, which would then facilitate a decision about long-term strategy. One such measure could be the Norstad Plan, which, if successful, would have the additional benefit of reducing the chance of a surprise ground attack in Europe. Moreover, because the proposed area was relatively small in size, it could serve as a laboratory for developing inspection techniques and for testing the intentions and sincerity of both sides. To overcome the political obstacles to the plan, Coolidge proposed that the designated inspection area would not be defined by national boundaries. His emphasis on the military value of the plan was also intended to deflect the anticipated outcry.⁷² The State Department endorsed the Coolidge Report and in accordance with Coolidge's recommendations integrated the Norstad Plan into the newly formulated U.S. disarmament policy that was introduced in January 1960.⁷³

With this, the process that had begun with Stassen came to fruition, and U.S. disarmament policy was no longer based on a "package deal" approach. Instead, U.S. negotiators would pursue gradual steps, with less than perfect systems of inspection and verification, and with a test inspection zone as an important ingredient. The revolution—and revolution it was—that Stassen sought to effect in U.S. disarmament policy was now complete, and the only task that remained was to obtain the consent of all NATO allies. Norstad had been pursuing this task since mid-1958, starting in West Germany. Herbert Blankenhorn, one of Adenauer's closest aides, expressed strong support for the inspection zone plan, describing it as "simple, honest, valid, and useful." Because Blankenhorn was a trusted confidant of the chancellor, the U.S. ambassador in Bonn assumed that Blankenhorn was speaking with Adenauer's ap-

71. Memorandum for the President, 27 April 1959, in DDEL, AWF, Administration Series.

72. Ray L. Thurston to General Norstad, 23 October 1959, in DDEL, Norstad Papers; Charles C. Coolidge to Secretary of State, 27 November 1959, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/11-259; and "Report by Charles Coolidge," 29 December 1959, in DDEL, White House Staff Secretary, Subject Series.

73. Philip J. Farley, Department of State, to Robert H. Knight, deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, 20 January 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/1-2060.

proval, an assumption that proved incorrect.⁷⁴ Adenauer's reaction to the European limited inspection zone against surprise attack was "categorically no." The chancellor argued that the plan's limited geographic scope would encourage neutralism in West Germany and possibly lead to the FRG's withdrawal from NATO. He had in mind the debate sweeping through West Germany between those who wanted to see the country associated with NATO and those who called for an independent European community. Adenauer was also afraid that the plan would institutionalize the status quo and perpetuate the existence of two Germanys. He further warned that under the Norstad Plan the Soviet Union would be given an opportunity to "conduct subversive activities" in West Germany under the guise of inspections.⁷⁵

French officials were also negative, being apprehensive about the risk of singling out Germany. At the same time, they feared an overly independent FRG and were interested in keeping U.S. troops in Europe to dampen any possible resurgence of nationalism in West Germany. French leaders favored the nuclearization of NATO, believing that this would guarantee a continued U.S. presence in Europe, and therefore had rejected the British Disengagement Plan of 1958. For much the same reason, the French government now rejected the Norstad Plan. French President Charles de Gaulle also noted that because the West, not the East, was under danger of surprise attack, the proposed zone should be narrower in the west and broader in the east by a proportion of ten to one.⁷⁶

Other NATO members were more receptive to the plan and its underlying concept. Howard Green, Canada's external affairs minister, "expressed enthusiasm for the plan," as did the Norwegians and the Italians. The Netherlands and Belgium took no position, at least for the time being.⁷⁷ These more

74. The American Embassy in Bonn to Secretary of State, 9 April 1958, in DDEL, Norstad, Lauris: Papers, 1930–1987.

75. The American Embassy in Bonn to Secretary of State, 14 April 1958, in DDEL, Norstad, Lauris: Papers, 1930–1987; The American Embassy in Bonn to Secretary of State, 18 April 1958, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/4-1858; United States Mission to NATO and European Regional Organizations to Christian Herter, Secretary of State, 4 January 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/1-460; Walter Dowling, the American Ambassador in West Germany, to Secretary of State, 5 February 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/2-560; Christoph Bluth, "Nuclear Weapons and British-German Relations," in Robert O'Neill and Beatrice Heuser, eds., *Securing the Peace in Europe, 1945–62: Thoughts for the Post-Cold War Era* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 140; Ronald J. Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949–1966* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), pp. 110–111; and Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace*, pp. 274–275, 277–280.

76. UK Permanent Delegation to NATO to the Foreign Office in London, 18 January 1960, IAD 41/24, in TNAUK, FO 371/149391; Foreign Office in London to Washington, DC, 14 February 1960, IAD 41/47, in TNAUK, FO 371/149373; and Dockrill, "The Eden Plan and the European Security," p. 167.

77. United States Mission to NATO and European Regional Organizations to Herter, 4 January 1960, in NARA; and the UK Permanent Delegation to NATO to the Foreign Office in London (see note 76 supra).

positive evaluations, however, were hardly enough to outweigh French and West German objections. To overcome these objections, Norstad began to emphasize the political aspects of his plan, something he had earlier avoided. He told Secretary of State Christian Herter, who had succeeded Dulles in April 1959, that the plan would encourage *détente*, which outweighed any anticipated political disadvantages and entailed no military risk for the West. If anything, the plan would reap significant military benefits. In an age of long-range nuclear missiles, the threat of conventional war in Europe seemed remote, and the danger of local hostilities and events like the Berlin crisis became more likely. An inspection system, he argued, would reduce the risk that these crises would spark a surprise ground attack that could then, through miscalculation, escalate into all-out nuclear war. Norstad's arguments convinced Herter that he should help the general in trying to persuade Adenauer and de Gaulle of the plan's advantages.⁷⁸ The State Department would have preferred that Norstad himself convince the Europeans to accept the plan, but because the proposal was now part of U.S. disarmament policy Herter joined Norstad in talks with the French and West Germans. Herter also tried to enlist NATO Secretary-General Paul-Henri Spaak in the effort, assuming that the latter's support would make it easier to convince Adenauer.⁷⁹

An opportunity to persuade the West German chancellor of the advantages of the Norstad Plan arose during Adenauer's scheduled visit to Washington.⁸⁰ The plan was added to the agenda of the Eisenhower-Adenauer meeting, and Norstad himself presented it to the president. This was the first time that Eisenhower had been apprised of the plan's details. Herter followed up with a memorandum elaborating the points that the president should emphasize in his meeting with Adenauer. To allay Adenauer's fears, Herter advised the president to emphasize that the sole purpose of the plan was the creation of a system of mutual inspection to prevent surprise attack. As such, it would not lead to any reduction of forces. As for Adenauer's concerns about the size of the inspection zone, the area subject to inspection could be defined in terms that covered parts of other NATO countries in order to avoid singling out Germany.⁸¹

At the meeting with Adenauer, Eisenhower tried to allay the chancellor's fears, but the session proved to be counterproductive. As suggested by Herter,

78. United States Mission to NATO and European Regional Organizations to Herter (see note 75 *supra*).

79. Christian Herter to the American Embassy in Paris, 21 January 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/1-2160.

80. Foy Kohler to Under-Secretary Livingston T. Merchant, 10 March 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/3-1060.

81. Memorandum for the President, 12 March 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/3-1260.

Eisenhower introduced the Norstad Plan in the broadest terms possible to circumvent Adenauer's objections. Eisenhower made no reference to the territorial dimension of the plan, claiming only that the United States intended "to offer to the Soviets a plan for continuous aerial inspection, divorced from any disarmament aspects, and operating in selected regions. It would be in the nature of a try-out, to see if it would be workable during a given period." Adenauer's reaction was "I would do it" and "It is a good idea." The president then added that it might include "one or two or three such areas, say, Siberia or Alaska or Central Europe." Adenauer's response was that "it was an excellent idea and would be a good test of Soviet good faith," and he asked for time to work out details of the plan in Bonn and in other NATO countries.⁸²

However, when Herter tried to follow up and mentioned the territorial aspects of the plan to Adenauer, the chancellor "reacted violently." Adenauer insisted that "in his conversation with the President there had been no mention whatsoever of an inspection zone in Europe."⁸³ Was this misunderstanding only the result of a "lapse by the interpreters," as West German Defense Minister Franz Josef Strauss tried to explain and as Eisenhower himself claimed on a separate occasion?⁸⁴ It is hard to tell. One thing that is clear is that Eisenhower's description of the Norstad Plan fell short of what it really was. The president introduced the plan in passing and deliberately avoided mentioning details that were certain to raise objections from Adenauer. When the details of the Norstad Plan were presented to the West German delegation, Foreign Minister von Brentano described it as "very bad and distasteful." He said that the West German government had already rejected it, and he claimed that the plan, by singling out the FRG, was incompatible with NATO's concept of equality and could lead to the alliance's disintegration. At the very least, the plan would affect the deployment of U.S. forces. Von Brentano asked Herter either to drop the idea or to extend the area under inspection.⁸⁵

Despite this setback, U.S. officials remained optimistic because Defense Minister Strauss and his military advisers, including the army chief of staff, Lieutenant-General Adolf Heusinger, were ready to consider the benefits of the Norstad Plan. Strauss believed that one of the reasons for the chancellor's

82. Memorandum of Conversation, 15 March 1960, in *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Vol. IX, pp. 225–226; and L. T. Merchant to Secretary of State, 15 March 1960, in DDEL, Norstad, Lauris: Papers, 1930–1987, Disarmament Plans.

83. Memorandum of Conversation (see note 82 supra).

84. Telegram from W. Dowling to Secretary of State, 27 April 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/4-2760; and Memorandum of Conversation, 17 March 1960, in *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Vol. IX, p. 239.

85. Memorandum of Conversation, 17 March 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012 1/3-1760.

negative stance was his conviction that the plan was really just Norstad's. Strauss felt that Adenauer did not understand how strongly the proposal was supported by the U.S. administration.⁸⁶ Strauss and Gebhardt von Walther, the Federal Republic's permanent representative to NATO, who were both in favor of the plan, hoped that a meeting between Norstad and Adenauer would lead to a change in the chancellor's defiant position.⁸⁷

With the fate of the plan still in doubt, the Eisenhower administration hoped to introduce the plan to the foreign ministers of four NATO countries who were due to meet on 1 May 1960 in Istanbul. The main issue on the agenda was Germany and the Berlin crisis, but the Americans sought to take the opportunity to promote the Norstad Plan.⁸⁸ The State Department sent the plan to the British, French, and West Germans for review before the Istanbul Conference and waited for the outcome of the Adenauer-Norstad meeting.⁸⁹ Before meeting with Adenauer, however, Norstad wanted to find out what de Gaulle had said at his meeting with Eisenhower on 28 April 1960. Having learned from Strauss that Adenauer had discussed the plan with de Gaulle, Norstad wished to know, before he met the chancellor, what the French president's position was. Norstad figured that if de Gaulle was against the plan, there was no point in meeting Adenauer.⁹⁰ In this regard, the U.S. State Department report on the Eisenhower-de Gaulle meeting was discouraging from Norstad's point of view. The report indicated that Eisenhower had described the plan the same way he had to Adenauer, including the reference to Alaska and parts of Siberia. The important point, asserted Eisenhower, was to find out "whether the Soviets would really allow effective inspection." De Gaulle agreed that "effective inspection was vital," but he claimed that it would be better to pursue an agreement to prohibit delivery of nuclear weapons by missiles and strategic aircraft and that the inspection mechanism should be designed to check for possible violations of such an agreement. De Gaulle's proposal touched on the major obstacle to progress in disarmament negotiations; namely, the Soviet Union's refusal to allow inspections to be carried out on its territory. Eisenhower mentioned this to de Gaulle, pointing out that such inspections had been the crux of his Open Skies proposal, which

86. W. Dowling to Secretary of State (see note 84 *supra*); and Cecil Lyon to Secretary of State, 28 April 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/4-2860.

87. Memorandum of Conversation (see note 85 *supra*).

88. L. T. Merchant to J. I. Irwin, Assistant Secretary of Defense, 21 April 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/4-2160.

89. Lyon to Secretary of State (see note 86 *supra*); and "NATO Ministerial Meeting at Istanbul," 28 April 1960, IAD 41/88, in TNAUK, FO 371/149396.

90. Lyon to Secretary of State (see note 85 *supra*). 28 April 1960, in NARA.

had been rejected by the Soviet Union in 1955. Because de Gaulle agreed with him about the vital importance of inspections, Eisenhower said that the U.S. proposal was meant to test whether “such an inspection could be done properly and whether there was good will on the part of the Soviets.” But de Gaulle remained concerned that the plan would single out Germany and thereby increase neutralist tendencies in West Germany, possibly separating it from the West.⁹¹ The French foreign minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, emphasized that the political dimension of the plan, not its military dimension, was what worried the French. Militarily, he said, the plan was reasonable, but the political consequences would be undesirable. One such consequence might be the neutralization of Germany. Another might be the denuclearization of the proposed zone. The only way to avoid such results would be by extending the inspection zone to include parts of both the Soviet Union and the United States.⁹²

After learning of de Gaulle’s position, Norstad surmised that it would be pointless to meet with Adenauer. However, West German officials encouraged him to speak with the chancellor, and the general agreed.⁹³ The meeting took place on 5 May, right after the Istanbul summit. Adenauer and von Brentano met Norstad before the formal appointment, and the chancellor told the general “categorically that the plan would destroy Germany.” The three then joined other U.S. and West German officials. In light of the initial exchange, the formal meeting seemed irrelevant. Norstad voiced this sentiment in his opening remarks, noting that “he felt he was delivering a funeral oration.” That was indeed the case. Adenauer stressed the danger that would arise from the presence of Soviet inspectors on West German soil. He also reiterated his support for an inspection zone stretching from the Urals to the Atlantic.⁹⁴ At the same time, Adenauer dismissed the military advantages of the plan, claiming that NATO already had sufficient information about Soviet deployments in the region. West German intelligence, he added, was capable of observing the entry of additional military forces into Poland or other countries. “We know the situation on the other side,” claimed Adenauer, and “furthermore, movements of less than ten divisions are unimportant.” He also argued that

91. Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, 24 April 1960, in *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Vol. VII, pp. 348–349; C. Herter to the Department of State, 29 April 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/4-2960.

92. Memorandum for the Record, 29 April 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/4-2960; and Lyon to Secretary of State, 29 April 1960, in DDEL, Norstad, Lauris: Papers, 1930–1987, Disarmament Plans 2.

93. Lyon to Secretary of State, 30 April 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/4-3060.

94. Memorandum of Conversation, 5 May 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/5-560.

the 30 divisions under Norstad's command were enough to prevent a surprise attack. Norstad responded that the plan would significantly improve NATO's intelligence abilities and military preparedness, but Adenauer remained unconvinced: "All I can see is that we lose the trust of the German people."⁹⁵

Adenauer "regarded the subject as closed," and so, in fact, did Herter.⁹⁶ But the chancellor wished to keep his rejection of the U.S. plan out of the public eye. If his subsequent silence on the matter might have fed hopes that the plan could be revived, those hopes were dashed when *Die Welt* obtained information about the Norstad Plan and indicated that it would publish a report. Any such publication would force Adenauer to come out publicly against the plan, something he was anxious to avoid. An indication of the mood in Bonn over the implications of the news leak is discernible in the description by Walter Dowling, the U.S. ambassador in West Germany, when he saw the German foreign minister and the chancellor: "Von Brentano, breathless and somewhat excited, joined the group." To avoid the impression that the chancellor was attacking a U.S. plan, von Brentano asked Dowling whether the administration would announce that the Norstad Plan had been initiated by General Norstad and not by Washington. The two of them and Adenauer agreed that the best thing to do was to "play down the significance and status of the plan" by saying that it was only one idea among many and that it had already been raised during the 1957 Disarmament Conference—which was indeed true. They also planned to claim that the plan was never officially presented to the West German government. Von Brentano proposed to go even further by having the administration announce its disapproval of the plan, but Dowling convinced him that this was too extreme.⁹⁷ One way or another, with *Die Welt's* publication of the story on 16 May, the plan was laid to rest. However, the publicity was more a confirmation than the actual cause of death.⁹⁸

95. W. Dowling to Secretary of State, 5 May 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/5-560.

96. Washington to the UK Foreign Office, 9 May 1960, IAD 41/93, in TNAUK, FO 371/149396; and Washington to Foreign Office, 11 May 1960, IAD 41/99, in TNAUK, FO 371/149396. Following the Norstad-Adenauer meeting, Under-Secretary Merchant agreed with Lord Hook, Minister at the British Embassy, that "the Germans had killed the Norstad Plan." Memorandum of Conversation, 11 May 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.00121/5-1160; and Sir Harold Caccia to the Foreign Office in London, 11 May 1960, IAD 41/97, in TNAUK, FO 371/149396.

97. Dowling to Secretary of State, 13 May 1960, in DDEL, Norstad, Lauris: Papers, 1930–1987, Disarmament Plans.

98. Llewellyn Thompson to Secretary of State, 2 June 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/6-260; the American Embassy in Paris to Secretary of State, 10 June 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/6-1060; Khrushchev to the President, Letter on Disarmament, 27 June 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/6-2760; and "New U.S. Disarmament Proposal," 1 July 1960, in NARA, RG 59, 600.0012/7-160.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the Norstad Plan failed because of the opposition of de Gaulle and Adenauer. Soviet leaders did not get a chance to respond to the plan, although their response was predictable. The West German and French leaders believed that the plan was as much political as military, despite the emphasis given to military considerations by Norstad and Herter. The dynamics of the intra-NATO negotiations over the proposal for a limited inspection zone and the success of the two West European leaders in halting the plan provide a good illustration of intra-alliance dynamics. Progress was achieved through an exchange of views that took the interest of each party into account. The United States did not arbitrarily exploit its unquestioned political and military superiority within the alliance. The Eisenhower administration wanted to see the Norstad Plan implemented as part of its nuclear disarmament strategy, but U.S. officials backed down in the face of determined West German and French opposition.

The plan failed, but in the end it presaged a change in U.S. disarmament policy—a conceptual transformation from disarmament to arms control in which Eisenhower was an active participant. This marked an advance from the futile aspiration to eliminate all nuclear arms to the more realistic goal of partial agreements designed to increase mutual confidence. (Only when Mikhail Gorbachev fundamentally changed Soviet foreign policy in the late 1980s did actual reductions of nuclear weaponry become feasible.) Stassen was the one who instigated this conceptual change in U.S. thinking about disarmament. He believed that the United States should abandon its “package deal” approach, a phrase introduced by Charles Coolidge, and settle for the gradual pursuit of partial agreements.⁹⁹ He used Eisenhower’s Open Skies proposal as leverage for making the change, transforming the “package deal” by means of a partial plan. Despite encountering opposition within the administration, he managed to win endorsement of his position from the State and Defense Departments as well as from the president. The Norstad Plan seemed to be a first practical step in that direction, and Eisenhower wanted to see it implemented.

In this respect, the Norstad Plan, like the U.S. position in the nuclear test ban negotiations that were conducted concurrently, heralded the change in U.S. policy on nuclear disarmament. Eisenhower was ready to give up the all-or-nothing approach and make concessions that would render the U.S. proposals more acceptable to the Soviet Union. He also relinquished another en-

99. Memorandum of Discussion at the 426th Meeting of the NSC, 1 December 1960, in DDEL, AWF, NSC Records; and “Report by Charles Coolidge” (see note 72 supra).

trenched position—the demand for a foolproof inspection system. The Norstad Plan, which was Stassen’s brainchild, treated inspection more benignly than did the plan that originated it all—the Open Skies proposal. The Norstad Plan failed, but its real historical achievement was in facilitating a conceptual change that paved the way for the Limited Test Ban Treaty and Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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